

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI
EASTERN DIVISION

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|--------------------|
| RUSSELL HOUSE, |) | |
| |) | |
| Plaintiff, |) | |
| |) | |
| v. |) | No. 4:10CV1832 DDN |
| |) | |
| FRANCIS SLAY, et al., |) | |
| |) | |
| Defendants. |) | |

OPINION, MEMORANDUM AND ORDER

This matter is before the Court upon the motion of plaintiff (registration no. 27305), an inmate at Eastern Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center, for leave to commence this action without payment of the required filing fee [Doc. #2]. For the reasons stated below, the Court finds that plaintiff does not have sufficient funds to pay the entire filing fee and will assess an initial partial filing fee of \$.78. See 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1). Furthermore, based upon a review of the complaint, the Court finds that the complaint should be dismissed pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B).

28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1)

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1), a prisoner bringing a civil action in forma pauperis is required to pay the full amount of the filing fee. If the prisoner has insufficient funds in his or her prison account to pay the entire fee, the Court must assess and, when funds exist, collect an initial partial filing fee of 20 percent of the

greater of (1) the average monthly deposits in the prisoner's account, or (2) the average monthly balance in the prisoner's account for the prior six-month period. After payment of the initial partial filing fee, the prisoner is required to make monthly payments of 20 percent of the preceding month's income credited to the prisoner's account. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2). The agency having custody of the prisoner will forward these monthly payments to the Clerk of Court each time the amount in the prisoner's account exceeds \$10, until the filing fee is fully paid. Id.

Plaintiff has submitted an affidavit and a certified copy of his prison account statement for the six-month period immediately preceding the submission of his complaint. A review of plaintiff's account indicates an average monthly deposit of \$3.92, and an average monthly balance of \$.86. Plaintiff has insufficient funds to pay the entire filing fee. Accordingly, the Court will assess an initial partial filing fee of \$.78, which is 20 percent of plaintiff's average monthly deposit.

28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B), the Court must dismiss a complaint filed in forma pauperis if the action is frivolous, malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. An action is frivolous if it "lacks an arguable basis in either law or fact." Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 328 (1989). An action is malicious if it is undertaken for the purpose of harassing the named defendants and not for the purpose

of vindicating a cognizable right. Spencer v. Rhodes, 656 F. Supp. 458, 461-63 (E.D.N.C. 1987), aff'd 826 F.2d 1059 (4th Cir. 1987).

To determine whether an action fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, the Court must engage in a two-step inquiry. First, the Court must identify the allegations in the complaint that are not entitled to the assumption of truth. Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 129 S. Ct. 1937, 1950-51 (2009). These include “legal conclusions” and “[t]hreadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of action [that are] supported by mere conclusory statements.” Id. at 1949. Second, the Court must determine whether the complaint states a plausible claim for relief. Id. at 1950-51. This is a “context-specific task that requires the reviewing court to draw on its judicial experience and common sense.” Id. at 1950. The plaintiff is required to plead facts that show more than the “mere possibility of misconduct.” Id. The Court must review the factual allegations in the complaint “to determine if they plausibly suggest an entitlement to relief.” Id. at 1951. When faced with alternative explanations for the alleged misconduct, the Court may exercise its judgment in determining whether plaintiff’s conclusion is the most plausible or whether it is more likely that no misconduct occurred. Id. at 1950, 51-52.

The Complaint

Plaintiff brings this action pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 alleging unnamed violations of his civil rights. Named as defendants are: Francis Slay, Eugene Stubblefield, Jerome Fields, and Unknown Brown.

Plaintiff seeks unspecified relief for purported violations of his civil rights. Specifically, plaintiff complains that he and the rest of the inmates in his dorm at the St. Louis Medium Security Institute were “quarantined” for several days when one of the inmates in his dorm contracted crabs. Plaintiff asserts that instead of the entire dorm being quarantined and cleaned, the inmate who contracted crabs should have been removed from the dorm.

Discussion

To establish a prima facie case under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, a plaintiff must allege two elements: (1) the action occurred “under color of law” and (2) the action is a deprivation of a constitutional right or a federal statutory right. Parratt v. Taylor, 451 U.S. 527, 535 (1981). The Federal Rules of Civil Procedure require litigants to formulate their pleadings in an organized and comprehensible manner. Even pro se litigants are obligated to plead specific facts and proper jurisdiction and must abide by the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure; however, plaintiff has failed to do so in this case. See U.S. v. Wilkes, 20 F.3d 651, 653 (5th Cir. 1994); Boswell v. Honorable Governor of Texas, 138 F.Supp.2d 782, 785 (N.D. Texas 2000). Although the Court is to give plaintiff's complaint the benefit of a liberal construction, the Court will not create facts or claims that have not been alleged. Plaintiff is required, to the best of his ability, to set out not only his alleged claims in a simple, concise, and direct manner, but also the facts supporting his claims as to each named defendant. Having carefully reviewed the

complaint, the Court concludes that this action is legally frivolous, because plaintiff has failed to assert any facts showing a violation of a constitutional right. Thus, the complaint fails to state a claim or cause of action under § 1983.

Even if plaintiff was somehow trying to raise a claim of unconstitutional prison conditions¹, his complaint would still be subject to dismissal as plaintiff has not indicated the capacity in which he is suing defendants. Where a “complaint is silent about the capacity in which [plaintiff] is suing defendant, [a district court must] interpret the complaint as including only official-capacity claims.” Egerdahl v. Hibbing Community College, 72 F.3d 615, 619 (8th Cir.1995); Nix v. Norman, 879 F.2d 429, 431 (8th Cir. 1989). Naming a government official in his or her official capacity is the equivalent of naming the government entity that employs the official. To state a claim against a municipality or a government official in his or her official capacity, plaintiff must allege that a policy or custom of the municipality or governmental entity is responsible for the alleged constitutional violation. Monell v. Department of Social Services, 436 U.S. 658, 690-91 (1978). The instant complaint does not contain any allegations that a policy or custom of St. Louis City was responsible for the alleged

¹To the extent that plaintiff is seeking injunctive relief from defendants, his requests for relief are moot given that he has already been transferred from the Medium Security Institute to the Eastern, Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center.

violations of plaintiff's constitutional rights. As a result, the complaint fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

Accordingly,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that plaintiff's motion to proceed in forma pauperis [Doc. #2] is **GRANTED**.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the plaintiff shall pay an initial filing fee of \$.78 within thirty (30) days of the date of this Order. Plaintiff is instructed to make his remittance payable to "Clerk, United States District Court," and to include upon it: (1) his name; (2) his prison registration number; (3) the case number; and (4) that the remittance is for an original proceeding.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk shall not issue process or cause process to issue upon the complaint because the complaint is legally frivolous or fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, or both.

An Order of Dismissal will accompany this Memorandum and Order.

Dated this 17th day of December, 2010.



HENRY EDWARD AUTREY
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE